

Our Corner Saloon
301 1st Street
Eureka
Humboldt County
California

HABS No. CA-2684

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12-EUR,
7-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
San Francisco, California

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

OUR CORNER SALOON

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Location: 301 1st Street, Eureka, Humboldt County, California.
UTM coordinates: 10.400510.4517580.

Significance: Dating to the late 1860s or 1870, the Our Corner Saloon building is among the earliest extant commercial buildings in Eureka. Major alterations have so diminished its integrity, however, as to preclude its meeting National Register criteria.

Description: Exterior: The former Our Corner Saloon is a one-story, wood frame, end-gable building originally clad in flush-board wood siding fastened with square, cut nails. Its gable roof, originally clad in wood shingles, is now largely covered by corrugated metal roofing.

A few original details remain to hint at the building's original vernacular Greek Revival style: boxed eaves, with *cyma reversa* moulding at the roof edge; evidence of gable returns; barge mouldings and strip cornice mouldings in the gable ends; and evidence of former corner pilasters visible under the gable returns, with a portion of capital moulding at visible at the building's southwest corner.

Missing exterior siding reveals a very light framing system with studs on approximately 24-inch centers.

All elevations of the building have been heavily modified and virtually stripped of any character-defining materials. The façade (south end) of the building has original siding only partially extant, and the west side has been heavily modified with various openings, including a large central door sheltered by pent roof. The gable roof is now partially wood-shingled, partially clad in corrugated metal over the shingles. The rear (north end) of building is extremely modified, with a central door cut in, and much original flush-board siding removed and replaced with beaded tongue-and-groove, which was also used to infill former openings. The east side is also heavily modified, with much original siding missing.

Visible evidence reveals that a former addition to the east side of the building has been removed, and vertical tongue-and-groove siding marks its former location; virtually no original fenestration remains extant. Similar evidence remains of a former rear addition to the building.

Interior: The interior of the Our Corner Saloon building is virtually gutted, and is largely a single open space, with a

OUR CORNER SALOON
HABS No. CA-2684 (page 2)

recent partial loft built in at the south (front) end of the building, and a partial office space at the southwest corner. There are remnants of original horizontal plank walls, mixed with remnants of various dimensions of vertical, beaded tongue-and-groove finish materials from various periods and alterations. The largely beaded tongue-and-groove ceiling likely replaced a plank ceiling. The structure's broad plank floor remains. Perhaps the most historically significant and interesting interior element is stenciling on the remnants of original lath-and-plaster south and west walls.

Historical Context: Previous surveys have given this building a date of ca.1880. Stylistic evidence, coupled with knowledge that 1st Street was Eureka's earliest principal commercial street and other historical evidence points to an earlier date of construction, closer to 1870. In 1871, T.G. Thorne, proprietor of Our Corner Saloon, had erected a new building on 1st Street between C and D Streets, indicating the Saloon was in place by that time; whether it was in the building now located at 301 1st Street is not clear, though stylistic evidence seen in the building's vernacular Greek Revival details supports this. Regardless of the date of original construction, the building has been continuously altered throughout its lifetime, as can be seen by examining Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps:

In 1886 the building had its current "footprint", and was identified as a saloon.

By 1889, the use had changed to saloon and billiards, and the building now had one-story additions at the east side, a large door had been cut into the center of east wall, and the portion of the addition fronting on 1st Street was used for notions;

In 1892 the building retained the same form, but the notions shop had become a restaurant.

Eight years later, in 1900, the only change was that the restaurant had become the White Laundry.

Major alterations occurred between 1900 and 1920. While a saloon still occupied the original portion of building, the former restaurant had become a store, there was another addition to the east side of the rear portion of the earlier east addition, and there was a one-story dwelling attached to the rear (north) end of the original building.

The 1949 Sanborn map reveals that the dwelling had been removed from the rear of the building, but that there was another narrow and deep addition at the north end of the previous eastern addition. Further, a one-story porch abutted

OUR CORNER SALOON
HABS No. CA-2684 (page 3)

the adjoining portions of the north end of both the original saloon building and the first eastern addition.

Today, faded wall signs on the west wall reading, variously, "Wines, Liquors, Cocoa, General," etc., give evidence of a multitude of past uses and hint at the alterations confirmed by the Sanborn maps. Other visible physical evidence in the form of missing original materials, infilled openings, new openings, new materials, interior materials visible on exterior surfaces, also bear witness to the extent of past alterations and changes of the years. Overall, there is very little historic material present on either exterior or interior of this building, other than the basic framing. The building is in very poor condition, having settled and wracked due to foundation failure and rotted framing members. The remaining remnants of historic materials suffer from continued weather and water damage and deterioration, and the building retains perhaps 40% of its original, character-defining exterior materials, and less than 25% of any character-defining interior materials. The interior stencil work is probably the most historically significant and interesting element left in or on the building.

Sources:

Architectural Resources Group. *Eureka: An Architectural View*. Eureka: Eureka Heritage Society, 1987.

Eureka Heritage Society. "Eureka 'Old Town' Historic District". Unpublished National Register nomination, November 1990.

Eureka Heritage Society. Survey notes, Roll No. 1, microfilm on file at Humboldt County Library, Eureka.

Fountain, Susie Baker. Notebooks. Humboldt Room, Humboldt County Library, Eureka. Vol. 14, p.90; vol. 19, p.215; vol. 22, p.148, 168; vol. 29, p.123; vol. 30, p.177, 270; vol. 31, p.37.

History of Humboldt County, California. San Francisco: Wallace W. Elliott & Co., 1881.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps of Eureka, California, 1886, 1889, 1892, 1900, 1920, 1949.

Steenfott, Norton. Photograph album, Humboldt Room, Humboldt County Library, Eureka.

Project Information: The Our Corner Saloon building is to be demolished in connection with a redevelopment project in the west end of the Eureka Old Town. This documentation, to the standards of the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) Architectural Data

OUR CORNER SALOON
HABS No. CA-2684 (page 4)

Form (formerly Level III), has been prepared as mitigation for the demolition of the building, in accordance with professional recommendations.

FLOOR PLAN

